

MAZUELO DE LA QUINTA CRUZ

Mazuelo is a difficult grape variety in Rioja Alta. It needs a long time to ripe, and harvest in our region is always too near to the edge of the cold, rainy Autumn. That is why only in special vintages, when the Sun shines all along October, the Mazuelo grapes reach an optimum level. Not as aromatic or delicate as Tempranillo, it is a powerful variety with a dark red colour and an intense, wide body. It asks for a hard work at the vineyard, and that probably explains how hard it is to find it all over the region.

The vineyard. La Quinta Cruz was planted in the early 80's. It is divided into two very different parcels: a lower part, with mostly clay soil facing South; and the higher one, stony and facing North-West. This last one is the most interesting, since you can obtain really small grains, with great concentration of colour and sweet and spiced mineral aromas. We make three 'green harvest' (August, early and mid September) in order to leave only the very best bunches in the plant.



The vintage. 2006 was hot and dry, with many hours of sun exposure for our vineyards, and one of the earliest harvest in years in Rioja Alta. A perfect vintage for Mazuelo.

The grapes were picked up in small cases on October 10th and, after having been selected at the sorting table, they fermented in a 4,500 Kg. stainless steel tank at a controlled temperature of 29-30° C, with frequent *remontages* and a long maceration. The malolactic fermentation took place in new barrels. We have selected the best 6 barrels for the first Mazuelo de la V Cruz (3 French, 3 American). The total production will be 1,516 bottles.



The name. For centuries, people in Briones walk to the locally named Calvary Mountain as pilgrims, stopping twelve times to pray at the twelve crosses of the

via crucis. Right besides the Fifth Cross lies the rare Mazuelo vineyard, therefore known as 'Mazuelo de la Quinta Cruz'.

*Bodega
Miguel Merino*

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The authors. Swedish winemaker Lars Torstenson is an old friend and teacher of Miguel Merino. He has worked for years in France on the study of the Carignan grape variety, most similar to Rioja Mazuelo. For the first time Torstenson & Merino have worked together to create this intense and modern Rioja, one of the very few 100% Mazuelo available in the market.

The wine (details).

Production: 1,516 bottles.

Oak.: Malolactic fermentation and 9 months rest in 6 new oak barrels (3 French Allier, 3 American). Four rackings before bottling.

Alc. 13 % vol.

Total acidity: 7,1 g/l

Residual sugar: 1,2 g/l

Tasting notes. Eye. Dark and clean red colour. Nose. Black fruits, leather, black pepper. Intense and balsamic. Palate. Firm and sweet tannins, with spiced and mineral notes and a fresh acidity.

